(d) by when a final decision in the matter is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) to (d) The rate of interest on Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) accumulations is fixed by Government on the basis of the recommendation of the Central Board of Trustees of EPF (CBT). CBT has recommended an interim rate of 8.5% for the year 2004-05. The CBT has not recommended a final rate of interest for 2004-05 to the Government.

Permission to Private Provident Fund Trusts to tap equity markets

35. SHRIMATI SUKHBUNS KAUR:
SHRI DATTA MEGHE:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to allow Private Provident Fund Trusts to tap equity markets and corporate debt for the benefit of the workers;

(b) if so, the details of the scheme; and

(c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to secure and promote the interests of the workers and to shield it against risks of equity trading?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) to (c) The pattern of investment has been revised with a view to providing wider avenues for investment by Non-government Provident Funds, Superannuation Funds and Gratuity Funds. As per the revised pattern, which is effective from 1.4.2005, an amount upto 5% of the total portfolio has been allowed to be invested in shares of those companies that have an investment grade debt rating from two credit rating agencies and upto 10% in debt instruments bearing investment grade rating and/or equity-linked schemes of mutual funds regulated by the Securities and Exchange Board of India.

Collection of Income Tax

36. PROF. R.B.S. VARMA:
SHRI LALITBHAI MEHTA:
SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA:
SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the amount of income tax collected during the last five years from 1999-2000 to 2003-2004 from all income tax payers, year-wise;

(b) the number of assessee as on 31st October, 2004 and the classification of such assessee as Corporate and Non-Corporate Assessees; State-wise;

(c) what steps taken to bring more citizens in the income tax net and increase income tax revenue;

(d) whether the surcharge and special surcharge during the last five years from 1999-2000 was levied on income-tax; and

(e) if so, at what rate, for what purpose and in which year such surcharges were levied and withdrawn?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) The amount of income tax collected during last five years from 1999-2000 is as follows:

(in Rs. Crore)

Fin. Year	Actual Collection			
	Corporation Tax	Income Tax	Other Direct Taxes	Total
1999-00	30692	25655	1612	57959
2000-01	35696	31764	845	68305
2001-02	36609	32004	585	69198
2002-03	46172	36866	50	83088
2003-04	63562	41386	140	105088